

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T ROME 9866

EXDIS

WHITE HOUSE FOR DR. BRZEZINKSI; DEPT FOR ASST. SECRETARY VEST

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PINR, IT, OVIP (CARTER, PRESIDENT JIMMY)
SUBJ: POSSIBLE PRESIDENTIAL VISIT TO ROME IN JULY

1. IN THE COURSE OF MY CONVERSATION ON MAY 26 WITH PRIME MINISTER ANDREOTTI ON SEVERAL SUBJECTS (SEPTELS), THE POSSIBILITY OF A VISIT TO ROME BY PRESIDENT CARTER IN MID-JULY CAME UP. EMPHASIZING THAT NO DECISION HAS BEEN MADE WITH RESPECT TO A VISIT TO ROME AT THE TIME OF THE BONN ECONOMIC SUMMIT, I ASKED ANDREOTTI WHETHER SUCH TIMING WOULD BE PROPITIOUS. ANDREOTTI REPLIED THAT THE PRESIDENT WOULD BE WARMLY WELCOMED. I SAID THAT IN CONSIDERING SUCH A VISIT TWO PRINCIPAL QUESTIONS WOULD HAVE TO BE EXAMINED CAREFULLY. THE FIRST CONCERNED SECURITY FOR PRESIDENT CARTER PERSONALLY, AS WELL AS FOR THE SIZEABLE ENTOURAGE THAT NORMALLY ACCOMPANIES A PRESIDENT ABROAD. WE WOULD NOT WISH TO PLACE UNNECESSARY BURDENS ON THE GOI, PARTICULARLY AT THIS TIME WHEN IT HAS ITS HANDS FULL WITH EXTRAORDINARY SECURITY PROBLEMS. THE SECOND QUESTION IS POLITICAL. THE US POSITION ON WESTERN EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTIES IS WELL KNOWN AND OBVIOUSLY WE WOULD NOT WISH THE PCI TO PROFIT FROM A VISIT BY PRESIDENT CARTER WHICH WOULD HAVE AS ITS PRIMARY PURPOSE TO DEMONSTRATE AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR PRIME MINISTER ANDREOTTI'S GOVERNMENT AND THE DEMOCRATIC,
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NON-COMMUNIST PARTIES OF ITALY. I ASKED ANDREOTTI WHETHER IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO ARRANGE A SCHEDULE FOR SUCH A VISIT WITHOUT INCLUDING POLITICAL PARTY SECRETARIES (I.E. PCI SECRETARY BERLINGUER).

2. ON THE FIRST POINT, ANDREOTTI SAID THAT OBVIOUSLY GIVEN THE IMPORTANCE OF PRESIDENT CARTER, THE ITALIAN

GOVERNMENT WOULD UNDERTAKE EXTRAORDINARY SECURITY MEASURES TO PROVIDE THE NECESSARY PROTECTION. HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT ADEQUATE SECURITY COULD BE PROVIDED AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD TAKE WHATEVER STEPS ARE NECESSARY TO ACCOMPLISH THIS. HE REITERATED HOW PLEASED HE WOULD BE IF THE PRESIDENT WERE TO VISIT ITALY, EMPHASIZING THE WARM WELCOME HE WOULD RECEIVE. ON THE POLITICAL POINT, ANDREOTTI SAID IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO LEAVE PARTY SECRETARIES OUT OF THE SCHEDULE IF THE VISIT WERE A SHORT ONE. A SHORT VISIT WOULD ALLOW THE GOVERNMENT TO REDUCE THE CEREMONIAL ASPECTS AND EMPHASIZE THE WORKING NATURE OF THE TRIP. A SHORT VISIT (I.E. NO MORE THAN 24 HOURS) WOULD ALLOW FOR ONE OFFICIAL MEAL AT THE QUIRINALE, WHICH COULD BE LIMITED TO GOVERNMENT AND ELECTED OFFICIALS INCLUDING PERHAPS THE CHAIRMEN OF THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEES OF THE TWO CHAMBERS, NEITHER OF WHOM IS A COMMUNIST. (FYI: THUS, COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION WOULD PROBABLY BE LIMITED TO INGRAO, PRESIDENT OF THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES, WHO WAS INCLUDED IN QUIRINALE DINNER FOR VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE.) IF THERE WERE TIME FOR A SECOND MEAL, ANDREOTTI SAID HE COULD OFFER A WORKING AFFAIR, THE CHARACTER OF WHICH WOULD ALLOW HIM TO LIMIT THE GUEST LIST. ANDREOTTI ASKED WHAT I THOUGHT ABOUT INCLUDING TRADE UNION LEADERS. I SUGGESTED IT WOULD BE BETTER TO KEEP IT ON A GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT BASIS. ANDREOTTI DID NOT PURSUE IT. ON THE OTHER HAND,

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CONTINUED ANDREOTTI, IF THE VISIT WERE LONGER, IT WOULD BE MORE DIFFICULT TO EXCLUDE SENIOR PARTY LEADERS FROM THE ADDITIONAL FUNCTIONS WHICH WOULD INEVITABLY BE SCHEDULED.

3. I NOTED THAT THE PRESIDENT GENERALLY PREFERS SHORTER VISITS, WITH THE EMPHASIS MORE ON THE WORKING THAN ON THE CEREMONIAL SIDE. I SUGGESTED THAT THE PRESIDENT MIGHT ALSO WISH TO SCHEDULE A CALL ON THE POPE DURING SUCH A VISIT. ANDREOTTI NODDED AGREEMENT.

4. EMPHASIZING AGAIN THAT NO DECISION HAS BEEN MADE ABOUT A POSSIBLE VISIT TO ROME, I ASKED ANDREOTTI WHETHER I COULD REPORT TO WASHINGTON THAT WE HAD REACHED AN UNDERSTANDING ON THIS ESSENTIAL POLITICAL QUESTION. ANDREOTTI AGREED. HE THEN ASKED ABOUT A POSSIBLE DATE. I REPLIED THAT JULY 18, FOLLOWING THE BONN SUMMIT, SEEMED LIKE A POSSIBLE DATE, IF A DECISION IS MADE TO COME TO ROME. GARDNER

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